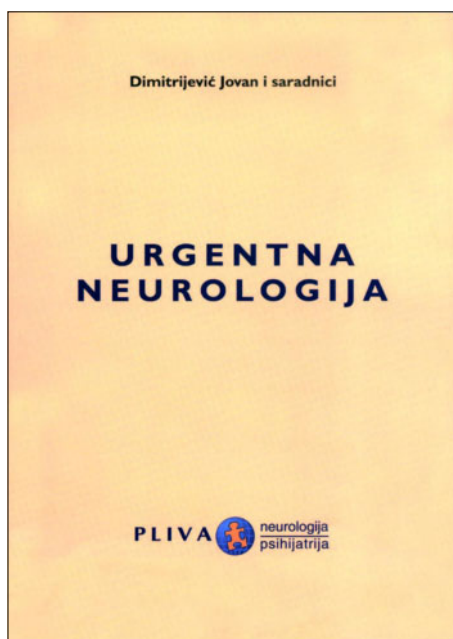


BOOK REVIEWS



URGENT NEUROLOGY

(URGENTNA NEUROLOGIJA),

by Jovan Dimitrijević and coauthors. Sarajevo, October 2005

The book *Urgent Neurology*, by Jovan Dimitrijević and coauthors, was published in Sarajevo, in October 2005, sponsored by Pliva in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this book the authors present clinical aspects of urgent neurological diagnoses, with differential diagnoses and therapeutic procedures. This book offers invaluable assistance not only to neurologists but to all physicians who meet patients in need of urgent procedures both within and beyond hospital wards.

The first chapter deals with disorders of consciousness, with emphasis on non-traumatic comas. The clinical findings, etiology of non-traumatic comas, and therapeutic procedures according to the etiology are described. The specificity of dealing with comatose patients is pointed out.

The next extensive chapter is dedicated to care of stroke patients, especially at stroke units, and organization of work at stroke units. Here the authors give a thorough description of the European strategy for early stroke treatment (1996), which has been accepted as a basis of the current therapeutic approach in patients with different stroke types (ischemic, hemorrhagic).

Status epilepticus is a frequent urgency in neurology. The book presents classification of the epileptic status, its pathophysiology and etiologic mechanisms as well as therapeutic approach and urgent therapeutic measures.

Special attention is paid to consciousness disorders encountered in urgent neurology. Most often these are epileptic seizures and syncope. Differential diagnosis between these two states is shown. Other consciousness events such as drop attacks, psychogenic disorders, hypersomnia, parasomnia, sleep apnea, transitional global amnesia, etc. are also presented.

Urgent neurology takes care of the central nervous system diseases. All neurologic manifestations of the pathologic processes of other organs and tissues are being managed within the scope of the underlying disease. Viral diseases of the central nervous system have many differential diagnosis possibilities in acute phase, so neurologists should know which one will help reach the accurate diagnosis and provide appropriate therapy. This chapter on viral infections of the central nervous system will definitely be of much help.

A dramatic clinical finding characterizes myasthenic crisis. Differentiation of myasthenic crisis from myasthenic relapse is crucial for appropriate and timely treatment for myasthenic crisis. Differential diagnosis, clinical findings, and necessary therapeutic procedures are described. The authors present similar clinical findings of neuropathies as another neurologic emergency.

A great part of the book is dedicated to pain syndromes in urgent neurology. Headaches are very common. Severe acute headache is presented in separate from primary vascular headache known as migrainous headache. The book also brings classification of head-

aches. Since cervical and lumbar syndromes are common in urgent neurology, they have a place in this book.

The last part of the book is dedicated to diagnostic methods that are so precious in acute neurologic disorders. Because of the great evolution of neuroimaging techniques, the diagnosis is faster and therefore specific therapeutic procedures are more readily introduced. The role of electroencephalography and transcranial

Doppler in acute neurological patients has not been forgotten, and their importance is properly pointed out.

The book *Urgent Neurology* presents an overview of the most common urgent neurologic states, and it merits to be found in hands of different medical specialists.

*Vesna Vargek-Solter
Sandra Morović*



LIVING FOR DEATH, DYING FOR LIFE?
(*ŽIVJETI ZA SMRT, UMRIJETI ZA ŽIVOT?*),
by Križo Katinić. Zagreb, 2005

At the end of 2005, a book of this very intriguing title was presented to the public. The author is Križo Katinić, MD, psychiatrist-psychotherapist from Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital. In his book, the author elaborates the meaning of life and death in many ways and approaches: medical, psychiatric, and even anthropologic and philosophical, with final remarks on therapeutic action over death and dying. The book also presents the philosophical view on death and mortality, with special reference to existential philosophy of Karl Jaspers and logotherapy of Victor E. Frankl. The author very bravely, without fear and pathos, analyzes the issue

of death, currently silently neglected due to the infirmity of finding the meaning of death and for fear that it represents the final defeat of modern medicine and productive life oriented, public reasoning.

The book is divided into three parts: the first part presents the research into attitudes to malignant diseases and death in two large groups of subjects (physicians working at Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital and teachers from three Zagreb high schools). The research led to some interesting conclusions: modern man avoids realistic attitude towards death; and the attitudes towards disease, death and mortality are modified by occupation.

In the second part, the author presents the philosophical views of death and mortality in the work of one of the most important philosophers of the 20th century, German physician and existential philosopher Karl Jaspers. The famous philosopher points out the term “finitude of death”, taking finitude as an existential premise for conjunction with own mortality, and concludes with a fundamental remark that “learning to living and knowing how to die – is one of the same”.

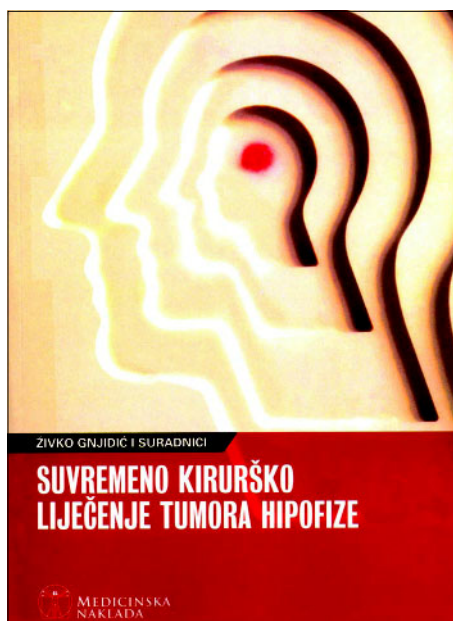
The third part of the book brings further analysis of the sense of living in disease and dying with nonsense through the work of the founder of logotherapy, Austrian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Victor E. Frankl, making connection with psychotherapy of dying and elaborating different psychotherapeutic approaches and techniques for patients suffering from malignant disease. The author emphasizes that severe disease should be considered as some kind of border or experience leading us to better understanding of unsolved and elusive death mystery. Special accent is put on malignant disease as a strong challenge to the meaning of life, and may also be speculated as “death before death”. Frankl offers exit from this vicious circle through acceptance of suffering and finding its sense and meaning, although it may be very difficult for both the patient and the therapist.

This valuable book with its multidisciplinary approach may exert a significant impact on medical, psychotherapeutic and intellectual thinking about death and mortality, considering that this is the first time that this topic has been so integrally and widely presented in the Croatian literature. The book will make everybody think about the meaning in deeper sense, and various specialists such as physicians, psychologists and

theologians will find encouragement for further surveys of terminally ill patients.

It should be mentioned that the author has made a pioneer psychotherapeutic work by establishing and running the first Psychological and Psychotherapeutic Consultation Service for oncologic patients and their families at Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital, and this book has arisen from his rich therapeutic experience.

Jure Mrgić



CURRENT SURGICAL THERAPY FOR PITUITARY TUMORS
(*SUVREMENO KIRURŠKO LIJEČENJE TUMORA HIPOFIZE*), by *Živko Gnjidić and coauthors*.
Medicinska naklada, School of Medicine, Zagreb, 2004, 170 pages.

The value of this scientific book lies in the fact that, for the first time in the Croatian medical literature, it thoroughly and comprehensively deals with an extremely important, complex and difficult subspecialist field of medicine, even at the international scale, in which our experts have successfully kept pace with the world achievements from the very beginning.

The book presents an original scientific work, as it is based on the professional and scientific analysis of a representative number of own cases, with critical use of abundant relevant literature. In all its aspects, the book

compares in quality to the international books of a similar approach and represents a rarity in medical literature.

The book has been designed according to the principle of multidisciplinary study where each of the authors critically, professionally and scientifically elaborates a particular subspecialist field. The book has 170 pages, 20 chapters, 86 illustrations, 23 tables, and 396 recent and relevant references. The nomenclature and units harmonized with the generally accepted technical and measuring standards are used in the book.

The book is primarily intended for specialists and subspecialists, residents and postgraduate students of the relevant medical professions dealing with diseases of the pituitary gland, and may prove highly useful also to researchers engaged in basic medical science.

As this is the first publication of this type in the Croatian medical literature, it is of utmost importance, obviously calling for its re-edition updated with new data and achievements in the field.

Mladen Belicza



HEALTH CARE IN BLATO THROUGH CENTURIES

(*BLATSKO ZDRAVSTVO KROZ VJEKOVE*),
by Nikola Bačić. Korčula, 2005

In August 2005, a valuable book by Nikola Bačić, MD, from Vela Luka, on the history of health care in Blato – Korčula, entitled *Health Care in Blato through Centuries*, was presented in Blato, island of Korčula. The book is a precious contribution to historical studies of this old place, dating from ancient times, especially considering the small number of scientific publications about the history of health care and organization of health care on the island of Korčula. This applies to old historical periods in particular, with data on the diseases, epidemics, physicians and management of the islanders being hidden in archives, local community and parish chronicles, and island annals.

The author has invested great efforts in collecting data by studying the archives, especially the one in Dubrovnik to which the island of Korčula was for centuries connected in terms of administrative and governing issues in many activities including health care.

As a physician, Dr. Nikola Bačić provides a synthesis and interpretation of a great body of historical data, thus describing the development of health care in Blato, a place with a tumultuous history burdened with many foreign governments and rulers. Historical epochs are chronologically followed. The first part of the book con-

tains general data on diseases and their treatment, from the beginnings of human civilization on the Earth through ancient times to the Middle Ages. So, the author describes the beginnings of treatment in Stone Age (a site with Neolithic skeletons has been discovered in Vela Luka), circumstances under the rule of the Illyrian, Greek and Roman, the epidemics of plague and leprosy, and the very early establishment of lazaretto for lepers. The next period begins with the Roman Empire collapse in the year 476, initially marked by Byzantine rule, followed by long-lasting Venetian rule. The development of Korčula Statutes in 1214, which regulated a number of issues in the field of the then public health, primarily antiepidemic measures, had a major role in settling health situation on the island. From this point on, the author follows the development of health care under Venetian rule through the end of the short-term French rule in 1815. The author presents a list of Korčula physicians in charge of Blato, and the most common causes of morbidity and mortality in Blato and on the entire island then governed by Venetian nobility. The next period was marked by Austrian rule and settling of health situation with the introduction of so-called Sanitad, naval health care offices established for prevention of contagious (infectious, epidemic) quarantine diseases. Sanitad was authorized for the control of ship health documentation, issuing of sanitary certificates, ship quarantine, control of quarantine period, approval for ships to enter the port and timing of their stay in the port. According to parish chronicles, infectious diseases, exhaustion and malnutrition were the leading causes of death at the time; later, the first cases of malignant diseases were reported.

Then the author describes categorization of medical professionals into three classes during the period of Austrian rule. Class one included graduated physicians with state exam. These were mostly district medical officers, with the degree of *Dottore condotto*. Class two included senior surgeons with appropriate training and approved by health authorities, mostly with the degree of *Chirurgo approvato* and *Maestro in chirurgia et obstetricia*. Class three included so-called *Bassi chirurghi*, junior surgeons, who were trained but not approved. In 1860, a physician graduated from the Vienna School of Medicine was appointed first district medical officer in Blato.

The period to follow was marked by Italian occupation and Kingdom of Yugoslavia rule. In these times, Dr. Ante Franulović should be mentioned as one of the most meritorious Blato physicians, who spent all his active

life in Blato self-denyingly treating his fellow people. The author follows health situation in the population of Blato from year to year, recording the most common diseases, the methods of treatment, along with thorough chronology of physicians and other health professionals working in Blato. He also follows the development of other medical fields, including pharmacy, midwifery and dental care.

The last period described in the book spans the time from World War II to the present, giving an account of the development of health care under new social conditions, along with modification in the main pathology and causes of mortality in the population. The end of the book brings a list of physicians born in or originating from

Blato on Korčula. Surprisingly, more than fifty physicians have come from the small place of Blato, among them academician Ivo Padovan, born in Blato in 1922.

The author of this comprehensive publication, Nikola Bačić, MD, a physician microbiologist at Dr. Ante Franulović Health Center in Vela Luka, is active as a singer in Don Ivan Oreb choir of St. Joseph Parish Church and also in the Vela Luka harmony group. He is especially interested in the history of his native town Vela Luka. His book entitled *The History of Health Care in Vela Luka* was presented in summer 2003, where he describes historical development of health care in his native town, where he has been working as a family physician and head of the laboratory of microbiology.

Jure Murgić

NEWS

SESTRE MILOSRDNICE UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL DOCTORS HEADING THE CROATIAN SOCIETY OF ENDOSCOPIC SURGERY

The Croatian Society of Endoscopic Surgery (*Hrvatsko društvo za endoskopsku kirurgiju*, HDEK) was founded in 1993 in Zagreb. The founders, Croatian medical doctors, elected Head Doctor Zoran Čala, MD, PhD, from Sveti Duh General Hospital as the first president of the Society, as the first laparoscopic gallbladder removal in Croatia was performed at that hospital. During the 13-year period, the Society organized seven congresses, many symposia, workshops and courses, and contributed tremendously to the strong advancement and acceptance of endoscopic surgical techniques. Endoscopic minimally invasive surgery was performed for the first time at Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital in 1994, when a laparoscopic cholecystectomy was performed with endoscopic equipment supplied by the surgeons themselves.

Endoscopic surgery is nowadays performed at all surgical wards in the country. Only few surgical procedures are not performed endoscopically and new endoscopic methods are introduced almost on a daily basis. Croatian doctors are members of international endoscopic societies and have conveyed their knowledge to other countries (Bosnia & Herzegovina, Slovenia, Macedonia, Greece, etc.), and are often invited speakers at international meetings.

Medical doctors of Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital were elected in October 2005 to lead the

Croatian Society of Endoscopic Surgery in the next 4-year term. Professor Miroslav Bekavac Bešlin, MD, PhD, surgeon, was elected president of the Society; Head Doctor Boris Ružić, MD, PhD, urologist, secretary of the Society; and Elizabet Glavan, MD, resident in surgery, administrative treasurer of the Society. Professor Mario Ledinski, MD, PhD, surgeon, was elected member of the supervisory board; and Professor August Mijić, MD, PhD, surgeon, and Assist. Professor Ivo Lovričević, MD, PhD, surgeon, were elected members of the administrative board.

The following goals were set by the Society's leadership: better education, better qualitative evaluation of endoscopic operations, and better collaboration to improve the quality of endoscopic surgery in all centers throughout the country. This year, the Society will organize the 8th Congress of Endoscopic Surgery with International Participation, to be held in Zagreb on December 7-9, 2006, at the Westin Zagreb Hotel. The Congress will be organized by Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital in collaboration with the Croatian Medical Association and Academy of Medical Sciences of Croatia. The main topics of the Congress will be endoscopic surgery of organs of the pelvic floor and endoscopic surgery in acute abdominal conditions. Invited speakers from the USA, Israel and Austria will introduce endoscopic cardiac procedures and endoscopic procedures in thoracic surgery.

We invite you to take part in the Congress and especially to share with us your successes as well as failures from which we all can learn more.

Welcome!

Professor Miroslav Bekavac Bešlin, MD, PhD
For the Croatian Society
of Endoscopic Surgery

Sestre milosrdnice



University Hospital

HISTORICAL REVIEW

This year our Hospital celebrates its 160th anniversary, as one of the oldest and largest health institutions in Croatia. The history and major historical events that marked the development of the Hospital and Croatian health care in general have been recorded in books and articles in various periodicals, one of them in this column. In relation to this valuable anniversary, the following should be emphasized: in addition to specialist and consultation service, Sestre milosrdnice University Hospital is now a teaching unit of two Zagreb University schools, School of Medicine and School of Dental Medi-

cine, along with postgraduate education, specialist and subspecialist training.

The Hospital consists of 13 university departments, 3 clinical institutes, pharmacy, and the following work units: nutrition, technical service, financial department and secretariat. Thirteen reference centers of the Croatian Ministry of Health have been established at the Hospital.

We do believe that our Hospital will successfully meet the manifold tasks, primarily to the benefit of our patients.



INTERNET GUIDANCE

Tim Albert, editor and awarded author of medical articles and books, is head of the courses organized by Blackwell, BMJ publisher, for editors of medical journals. He is also the initiator of these interesting and useful pages on how to write medical articles. You are invited to look the recommendations on e-mail, which are excellent indeed. Besides the list of useful books, there is a highly intriguing, even amusing column entitled Gripes and Groans, intended for all those who want to write something about grammatical errors, pompous style, incomprehensible sentences, and various other sorts of nonsense when writing medical articles.

<http://www.timalbert.co.uk>

There is no need to introduce the well known pages of the American College of Surgeons, which are excellently designed and highly useful. Here we point to the pages on: Statements on Principles and College Guidelines. Even if not providing solutions for all our dilemmas in various surgical settings, they can indicate the problems and suggest the ways to overcome them.

<http://www.facs.org>

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